



Key Problems with the Republican Bill to Rewrite the ESEA

There is broad agreement that the **No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)**, the most recent reauthorization of the **Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)**, is outdated and is restraining schools from making the kinds of improvements needed to benefit students, communities and the economy. Eleven years after enactment of NCLB, Congressional action to improve and reauthorize this landmark law is long overdue.

Since Congress has failed to achieve bipartisan reauthorization, the Administration is now working with all but 6 states to obtain or implement ESEA flexibility plans, or waivers from NCLB. All participating states are working to adopt college- and career-ready standards and develop both differentiated accountability and teacher evaluation systems.

NCLB should be rewritten this year. The rewrite must ensure that:

All students graduate from high school, college and career-ready

All students have access to a world-class education regardless of background or zip code

Increased flexibility is balanced with accountability to children, their families, and taxpayers

Unfortunately, instead of building on what we have learned over the last ten years, the Republican majority has introduced a partisan bill (H.R. 5) that would turn back the clock on equity and accountability in American public education. The Republican bill is a combination of three bills considered by this committee last Congress: Republican partisan bills H.R. 3989 and H.R. 3990 and the bipartisan charter school bill H.R. 2218.

The Republican bill walks away from the broad national consensus that our schools must prepare students to graduate college-ready and career-ready, and threatens to undo the work underway in states.

- The bill does not contain requirements that states set high standards to graduate students who are college and career-ready.

- The bill does not support a high quality, meaningful assessment system, especially for students with disabilities and English language learners.
- The bill does not include critical programs to help states adopt new standards and make them meaningful in every classroom and to every teacher.

The Republican bill shirks our nation's civil rights responsibilities to ensure all children have access to a quality education.

- The bill dismantles the core of accountability under current law. Schools will not be expected to improve. Students will not be served equitably. Schools will not be expected to intervene when inequities in services and performance persist.
- The bill completely removes students with disabilities from the accountability system by allowing all students with disabilities to be taught to different standards and to take different assessments than the rest of the student body.
- The bill removes requirements to improve achievement for English Language Learners under current Title III law.
- The bills dilutes assistance for disadvantaged students by block-granting Title I funding and consolidating critical services provided to English Language Learners, migrant students, Indian students, or neglected and delinquent students.
- The bill shifts teacher training funds away from the schools with the highest poverty.
- The bill ignores a loophole that allows districts to send less money to low-income schools and more money to wealthier ones.

The Republican bill undermines accountability to taxpayers.

- The bill removes Maintenance of Effort requirements that ensure states and districts maintain their share of funding in order to receive federal funds, despite the generous flexibility provided in current law and the fact that no state has ever applied for relief from Maintenance of Effort under NCLB.
- The bill block-grants a large number of programs, which reduces accountability for the quality of services that these programs provide or how program funds are spent.

- The bill earmarks 10 percent of the \$2.0 billion block grant for private entities that operate outside of the traditional school system, including through private school vouchers.
- The bill's funding cap underfunds public education by authorizing historically low program levels, in line with Republican budget priorities and irresponsible spending cuts, including sequestration.

The Republican bill eliminates critical supports to provide a balanced education.

- The bill focuses primarily on math and reading assessments, without programmatic support for literacy, STEM or other subjects to provide for a well-rounded curriculum. *Unlike last Congress, the bill does include standards and assessments for science – with one assessment per grade span.*
- The bill eliminates wrap-around supports that are critical to support student learning.
- The bill eliminates requirements to ensure quality professional development for teachers.
- The bill creates an arbitrary cap on teacher quality funds for class size reduction, regardless of school need and despite research showing the importance of small class size in the early grades.
- The bill requires teacher evaluation systems, but only requires that evaluation outcomes be used only inform personnel decisions, with no protections for local collective bargaining rights.

The Republican bill walks back from improvements in educational access and equity for homeless children and youth.

- Despite inclusion of provisions to improve access to educational services for homeless children and youth in the Republican bills last Congress; the majority stripped much of those improvements due to the departure of Mrs. Biggert.
- Drastically reduces the program authorization for McKinney-Vento, despite a 57% increase in homeless children since 2009 and the fact that that the program currently reaches less than 20% of school districts.